

## Jostling for position

Last week we talked about the creation of Medicare Locals and how the first fifteen of these primary health care organisations will be selected from within the existing divisions of general practice. The Federal Government will release the final details about Medicare Locals and what functions they will fulfil shortly. Once we know these, we will be better placed to determine why and with whom we should align ourselves.

The Cranny Report - commissioned by AGPN - suggests we align with ACT Division (see analysis below). What do you think? CEO Sam Ireland will be out and about to talk with you once the Medicare Locals expressions of interest are released and we know exactly what we're working with. If you have any comments to make in the meantime, please email [info@sgpn.com.au](mailto:info@sgpn.com.au).

Meanwhile, the government's YourHealth website ([www.yourhealth.gov.au](http://www.yourhealth.gov.au)) has loads of information about the health reforms and you can register for email updates.

## Don't fence me in

### CEO Sam Ireland analyses the health reform options for SGPN outlined in the Carla Cranny boundary mapping exercise

First some background on the [Cranny Report](#). Commissioned by the Australian General Practice Network, Carla Cranny and Associates this year undertook a boundary mapping exercise to recommend a new structure for Divisions of General Practice to transition to Primary Health Care Organisations (now known as Medicare Locals). The Federal Government requires the new PHCOs to service minimum populations and therefore many Divisions will need to merge or partner with another Division to form a larger organisation.

Many Divisions, including ours, were unhappy at the Cranny Report's lack of consultation. However, it is worth noting that neither the Federal Government nor AGPN has endorsed the report and that the Federal Government is calling for feedback. We will respond to the report once we have spoken with our GPs to get a sense of how to proceed.

### The recommendations

The Cranny Report recommends that our organisational future as a Primary Health Care Organisation is symbiotic to a relationship with Canberra.

At a planning level this makes sense although we need to be alerted to the differences in the capacity of the Canberra-centric model to achieve the suggested health reforms, that is, a very well regulated primary and healthcare market.

The Report supports larger PHCOs operating across state boundaries. It suggests ACT Division of General Practice can transform to a PHCO, either in collaboration with SGPN or separately:

- ACT as standard alone PHCO for ACT residents – urban model and academic focus
- Regional PHCO incorporating areas adjoining Canberra only, ie Yass and Queanbeyan
- Incorporating all of SGPN reflecting education, training and regional hospital flows. Crosses state boundary. Could have two 'state based' PHCO's working in a partnership.

Cross border PHCOs, the report says, especially those with significant populations such as Southern NSW and ACT, need to be underpinned by interstate agreements if states have a continuing role in funding and management of community health and specialist community based services such as mental health.

A national options summary in table form can be found on page 24 of Part 1 & 2 of the [report](#) and the detail about SGPN and ACT can be found between pages 43 and 47. (If you can't pick up the links on these pages go to [www.yourhealth.gov.au](http://www.yourhealth.gov.au) and search 'cranny').

The Cranny report presents no other options for SGPN.

We have, however, been in discussions with Shoalhaven and Riverina divisions about potential partnerships and we'll be talking to you soon about your views.

## New Indigenous PIP Q&A

### Sharing indigenous health resources

The Closing the Gap Indigenous Health Program is a national approach and 80 Divisions across the land, including SGPN, have been funded to employ Indigenous Health Project Officers.

Each participating Division has planned and structured a project to fit the demographic and service provision landscape of the area it covers.

A major innovation has been an agreement by many Divisions to share and adapt Closing the Gap project information, promotion and education resources.

This approach has brought some valuable and cleverly designed material to the national arena. The Adelaide North East Division of General Practice has developed a very comprehensive [Closing the Gap Q&A](#) resource which provides all the essential information about the PIP and everything else to do with the program in a logical and easily accessible format.

The Division has generously agreed to share it with SGPN and it can be found on our homepage at [www.sgpn.com.au](http://www.sgpn.com.au). Call Robin Vote on 4821 0436 if you have any queries.

## What's on? Education and events for GPs, PNs and practice staff

**'Difficult Conversations'** *Thursday, July 22, Batemans Bay*  
Learn to talk honestly and openly with people no matter how delicate the topic or powerful the individual. An all day course presented by the Centre for Community Welfare Training. Click [here](#) for more information or go to [www.acwa.asn.au](http://www.acwa.asn.au).

**'The Accidental Counsellor'** *August 3 & 4, Merimbula*  
Workers who are not employed as counsellors often find themselves placed in a counselling role. A two-day course presented by the Centre for Community Welfare Training. Click [here](#) for more information or go to [www.acwa.asn.au](http://www.acwa.asn.au).

**Family Planning NSW Annual Conference and Open Day**  
*Saturday, 14 August, Family Planning NSW offices at 328-336 Liverpool Road, Ashfield.* Get the latest information on reproductive and sexual health in just one day. \$175 and 13 Category 2 points. Click [here](#) for information and registration.

**Aged and Dementia Care Symposium** *Friday 22 October, Batemans Bay.* SGPN is co-hosting this full-day education event with GSAHS, Alzheimers Australia and the NSW Government. Nursing and Allied Health CPD hours: 7. Medical: 10 Category 2 points with RACGP and 5 PDP points with ACCRM. Here's a [link](#) to the program and registration form on our website. Alzheimers Australia is managing the registrations.

**Save the date! Local Primary Care Collaborative Workshop**  
*Saturday 21 August, Canberra.* Agenda coming your way soon.

## SGPN recommends...

### Could a psychiatrist help you help your patient?

The RACGP's GP Psych Support service provides general practitioners with free patient management advice from a team of psychiatrists. The service operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. GP Psych Support provides specialist advice in drug & alcohol psychiatry, child & adolescent psychiatry as well as perinatal psychiatry, geriatric psychiatry and general psychiatry.

You can provide patient information by submitting a webmail query at [www.psychsupport.com.au](http://www.psychsupport.com.au), by calling 1800 200 588, or by sending a completed FaxBack form, downloadable from [www.racgp.org.au/gpsychsupport/access](http://www.racgp.org.au/gpsychsupport/access), to 1800 012 422.

GP Psych Support is managed by the RACGP, although you do not have to be a member to use the service.

To register with GP Psych Support, please call 1800 200 588 or visit [www.psychsupport.com.au](http://www.psychsupport.com.au).

## What we did this week... (a little slice of SGPN life)

Our Healthy for Life and Closing the Gap teams promoted their programs at community bbqs in Moruya and Queanbeyan to celebrate NAIDOC Week. Our new brochures and posters were a big hit (you'll get your supplies soon) and on a freezing cold day by the river in Moruya, the Healthy for Life beanies quickly became the headwear of choice.

An initiative to support Boorowa mums in getting back to study or work has been gauged a huge success. Called "Getting in to the Groove", our drought support worker Kay Nash developed the pilot program with TAFE Riverina and Centrelink. Kay says there are plans to continue the program next year and to open it to mothers of all ages.

Welcome to Bronwyn Owen, SGPN's new psychologist in Bega. Bronwyn is taking your referrals now, working Tuesdays and Thursdays out of Healthy for Life House in Carp Street.

Don't forget the 2010 round of Federal Government infrastructure funding is now open offering up to \$500,000 to upgrade facilities in general practices. More information is available at [www.health.gov.au/tenders](http://www.health.gov.au/tenders) or [www.health.gov.au/gpsuperclinics](http://www.health.gov.au/gpsuperclinics) or call Linda Brown at SGPN by this Friday if you'd like to discuss the possibilities.

## GP Health Checks...and then there was one

Our very popular GP Health Checks were fully subscribed but due to a cancellation we now have one available. The full-day screening is conducted at St Vincents Hospital. To book, contact Lisa McBurney at Executive Health Solutions on 02 8382 6540.

And in case you need convincing, here's a testimonial from a local GP who attended recently: "sincere appreciation and thanks for giving me the opportunity to attend the health check at SVH...it was great!" What are you waiting for? Dial now!

## Locums needed down south

**Pambula Medical Centre** needs a locum from 20 September to 1 October. Interested or know someone who might be? Please call practice manager Toni Beazley on 6495 6688.

**Canning Street Surgery in Bega** requires a locum from 1-30 September. Call practice manager Sybil Hukins on 6492 2922 for further information.

A reminder to practices that the NSW Rural Doctors Network ([nsw.rdn.com.au](http://nsw.rdn.com.au)) operates a locum placement service. Call Liz Elwin on 02 6953 6454 or follow these links to [submit a request](#) for a locum or to find out the [costs](#) for a NSW RDN locum.